

News Release



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SERVICE SEEKS PROPOSALS FROM STATES FOR 2007 ENDANGERED SPECIES GRANTS

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is currently seeking proposals from states and U.S. territories interested in securing Federal grant assistance to acquire land or plan for endangered species conservation efforts. For fiscal year 2007, the President's budget request for the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund would provide approximately \$80 million in grant funding for conservation planning activities and habitat acquisition for federally protected species. Proposals must be submitted to the appropriate Service Regional Offices by February 7, 2007.

"Providing grants to our state partners is one of the most important tools we have to conserve imperiled species," said Service Director H. Dale Hall. "These grants enable states to build partnerships with local communities and private landowners to support voluntary stewardship efforts for wildlife conservation nationwide."

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund is authorized under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act and provides grants to states and territories to support participation in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for species on the Federal list of threatened and endangered species, as well as for species that are either candidates or have been proposed for listing.

The Service is seeking proposals under three Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund categories:

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants - These grants provide funds to states and territories for acquisition of threatened and endangered species habitat in support of approved recovery plans. Acquiring habitat in order to secure long term protection is often the critical element in a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants - These grants provide funds to states and territories to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs). The purpose of an HCP is to ensure adequate protection for threatened and endangered species, while at the same

time providing for economic growth and development. These grants provide support for baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities.

HCP Land Acquisition Grants - These grants provide funds to states and territories to acquire land associated with approved HCPs. Grants do not fund the mitigation required of an HCP permittee; instead, they support acquisitions by the State or local governments that complement actions associated with the HCP.

By law, the state or territory must have a current cooperative agreement with the Service and contribute 25 percent of the estimated program costs of approved projects, or 10 percent when two or more states or territories undertake a joint project. The grants are expected to be awarded during summer 2007.

For more information about these grants and grant application requirements contact: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Division of Consultation, Habitat Conservation Planning, Recovery and State Grants, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420, Arlington, VA 22203, 703-358-2106. Information also can be accessed at <http://www.fws.gov/angered/grants/>.

The Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund is identified in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance as number 15.615.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million- acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.

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For more information about the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, visit our home page at <http://www.fws.gov>